

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 790

By Staples

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Helen Ashe of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Helen Ashe; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Ashe was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Helen Ashe was born along with her twin sister, the late Ellen Turner, in Abbeville, South Carolina. The pair moved to Knoxville at the age of eighteen with money given as a graduation gift from their parents; and

WHEREAS, like her sister, Mrs. Ashe was a pioneer in integration, becoming the first black resident of her East Fifth Avenue block; and

WHEREAS, Helen Ashe served with acumen and alacrity as a co-founder of the Love Kitchen nonprofit organization, which gives Knoxville's needy a place for food, clothing, and fellowship; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Ashe started the Love Kitchen with her sister out of an East Knoxville church basement on February 14, 1986. The two had a dream and a plan to feed the hungry in Knoxville, and on that first day, they fed twenty-two people; and

WHEREAS, thirty-two years later, the organization serves more than 3,000 meals each week from its permanent home at 2418 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, including in-house breakfasts and lunches; emergency food bags filled with canned and dry goods; and delivered meals to the elderly, the disabled, and the homebound; and

WHEREAS, Helen Ashe and her sister, Mrs. Turner, made several nationally televised appearances to promote Love Kitchen, including spots on *The Sally Jesse Raphael Show*, *The*

*Oprah Winfrey Show*, and *The Secret Millionaire*, which garnered more attention and donations for their endeavor; and

WHEREAS, prior to their creation of the Love Kitchen, both sisters operated restaurants and then pursued trailblazing careers in nursing until they retired; and

WHEREAS, widely known as a hugger with a compassionate soul, Mrs. Ashe coined the charity's motto, "Everybody is God's somebody," and she often said of those who came to the Love Kitchen, "As long as they're hungry, we'll feed them"; and

WHEREAS, she was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Helen Ashe enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband, the late Henry "Al" Ashe, who helped the Love Kitchen during its early years by allowing the charity to operate out of his truck; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Ashe leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Helen Ashe, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Ashe.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.